

## Biology teacher goes to Antarctica

By Faun S. Fishback  
Kentucky Department of Education



Teachers might joke about "going to the end of the Earth" for good professional development, but biology teacher Glenn "Skip" Zwanzig actually made the trip!

Zwanzig, who teaches at Jefferson County's duPont Manual High, spent seven weeks in Antarctica last fall. He went as a member of the National Science Foundation's Teachers Experiencing Antarctica and the Arctic Program, which seeks to immerse teachers in a research experience that will enrich their classroom teaching.

Zwanzig worked alongside David Petzel from Creighton University to study the role and regulation of chloride cells in Antarctic fish. Zwanzig's work with the project may help scientists answer questions about how to regulate high blood pressure in people.

Despite sub-zero weather, a brush

with frostbite and time spent away from his class, Zwanzig recommends this real-world experience to other teachers. "It was really, really good," he said. "It offered me such good hands-on science experience. It helped me as a teacher, and it will help my students. In the program I teach, my kids do research. I will now be better able to guide them through their research and apply what I learned to what they do in my class."

As part of his participation in Teachers Experiencing Antarctica, Zwanzig shared his Antarctic experiences through a daily journal entry posted on the Internet. (The address for his Web page is [http://tea.rice.edu/tea\\_zwanzigfrontpage.html](http://tea.rice.edu/tea_zwanzigfrontpage.html).) He kept in e-mail contact with several Jefferson County classes, including his own, as well as others throughout the country and in several foreign countries. In addition to his work at the McMurdo Station lab and in fishing huts along the ice edge, Zwanzig wrote a research paper while in Antarctica.

Now that he is back in Kentucky, he will mentor two teachers in his district, develop lesson plans based on his experiences, make presentations to local and state teachers groups and maintain a presence on the Teachers Experiencing Antarctica Web site. He and other program participants will post their lesson plans on the Web.

Zwanzig may be contacted by phone at (502) 485-8241 or by e-mail at [szwanzig@iglou.com](mailto:szwanzig@iglou.com). To find out more about the Teachers Experiencing Antarctica Program and the work of other participants, visit the Web at <http://tea.rice.edu>.



Photo by Rick McComb

Primary students at Phillis Wheatley Elementary crowd around Skip Zwanzig and an inflatable Emperor penguin to ask questions about Zwanzig's work in Antarctica and share what they have learned about the continent.

### Primary students connect with Antarctica visit

It was a day they'd anticipated ever since Geo Bear, their globe-trotting, stuffed-toy mascot, returned from Antarctica. Not even a quick read of their favorite silly rhyming book could lower the level of excitement in Shelli Barber's primary class at Phillis Wheatley Elementary in Jefferson County as students awaited a visit by their e-mail pen pal, Glenn "Skip" Zwanzig.

Zwanzig, a biology teacher at duPont Manual High, didn't disappoint. He arrived with a four-foot tall inflatable Emperor penguin under one arm and a slide projector under the other. He was ready to talk with the students about his seven-week stay in Antarctica as a working scientist.

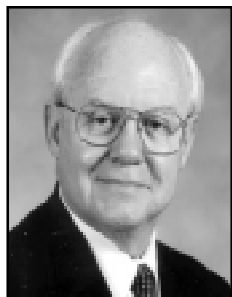
Zwanzig used his planning period to answer questions, show slides and explain scientific concepts to the inquisitive students. Although they had communicated via e-mail with Zwanzig while he was in Antarctica, the students wanted him to repeat stories he told them about his snowmobile rides, sleeping in an igloo and Geo Bear's encounter with a penguin.

They asked why fish don't freeze in Antarctica's waters, about recycling at the science station and about the continent's volcano. Perhaps the hardest concept for the students to grasp was why the sun shines in Antarctica but doesn't warm the air or land.

Barber, the primary teacher, learned about the trip because both she and Zwanzig work with a minority student program in Jefferson County. She asked if he would take Geo Bear along and take photos of the bear at several icy sites.

The students knew they were "talking" with Zwanzig in Antarctica when they sent questions to him via e-mail, she said. However, it wasn't until they received a digital photo of Geo Bear that reality set in.

*Continued on Page 14*



# Commissioner's Comments

By Wilmer S. Cody, Commissioner of Education

## Y2K: technology challenges and teaching opportunities

A favorite topic of conversation these days is the "Y2K Problem," also called the "millennium bug." The reason: Many computers are programmed to date their operations and applications with only the final two digits of the year. The instant we reach the year 2000, the dates in those computers will roll from "99" to "00." The computers, programmed to assume "19" as the first two digits of every year, will interpret the double-zero to mean 1900.

Some say this glitch will cause massive disorganization and crashed systems. Others predict little more than temporary inconveniences and annoyances. Throughout the world, technicians are scrambling to rewrite the code in computers and computer-controlled devices. The "millennium fix" is well under way, and the effort is a priority in most quarters.

Such is the case at the Kentucky Department of Education. Much of the progress Kentucky's districts and schools have made in teaching, learning and communicating — and much of the improvement in administration, school facilities management and pupil transportation — are inescapably

tied to technology. Uninterrupted progress in all of those areas depends on continuous access to information and services.

The department's Office of Education Technology has taken the lead in identifying Y2K problems and developing solutions for the information technology services it provides for the department staff, 176 school district offices and 1,400 schools. This includes e-mail, Internet access and financial management systems, among other services. Fixes at the state level have been made or are under way.

Districts and schools are responsible for assessing and correcting Y2K problems in their own hardware and software. To support that effort, the department has worked for the past 18 months with Kentucky Education Technology System hardware and software vendors and with all service providers to identify products that could fall prey to the Y2K problem. Status reports from each vendor and provider are posted on the department's Web site as soon they become available. This is a tremendous, time-saving resource for educators and technicians at the local level.

In the area of facilities management and pupil transportation, the department's emphasis is on the safety and welfare of students, teachers and staff. Although districts make independent choices about equipment and systems for food preparation, heating and cooling, pupil transportation, security, fire alarms and caution lights, the Department of Education is providing information and resources for making local equipment assessments.

The department is committed to minimizing the impact of the millennium bug. Our technology leaders have traveled the state to hold Y2K awareness meetings and "how to" workshops for district and school personnel. They have met with groups representing superintendents and school facilities managers. They have mailed to every district a "survival guide" outlining what *could* happen to technology-driven equipment and what to do about it. The department will continue to respond to Y2K needs.

What impact will Y2K have on your classroom? The department's goal is that you will experience little or no disruption in technology services. Still, all of us are part of a global system.

No matter how well we prepare, a weak link elsewhere, in systems over which we have no control, could cause trouble. With that in mind, I offer these recommendations as you plan your teaching strategies for January 2000:

1. If you have Y2K concerns about hardware or software in your classroom, start now to work with your school and district technology coordinators. Remember that most instructional software is not date-related, but administrative and systems software can be.

2. Involve your school's student technology leaders in assessing your classroom's technology and correcting any Y2K problems they find.

3. Design alternatives to technology-based teaching and learning activities. Even those who prepare for Y2K may find some technology services and resources unavailable or delayed.

4. Seize the opportunity to incorporate the new century and millennium into instruction. This momentous time holds unlimited possibilities for teaching and learning activities in all content areas.

## Kentucky Teacher Forum

### Open discussion about public education

In the December-January issue of *Kentucky Teacher*, Education Commissioner Wilmer Cody invited teachers to comment on a set of teacher preparation and professional development proposals (available for review on the Internet at [www.kde.state.ky.us/coe/ocpg/dpi/teacherinitiatives/initiatives.htm](http://www.kde.state.ky.us/coe/ocpg/dpi/teacherinitiatives/initiatives.htm)). On Page 3 are two of the responses teachers have sent, plus the commissioner's reply.

Additional comments are welcome. To respond directly to the commissioner, mail comments to Wilmer S. Cody, Kentucky Department of Education, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601; send e-mail through the KETS global listing or to [wcody@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:wcody@kde.state.ky.us).

Teachers also are welcome to respond in these ways:

- Send e-mail to [kyteach@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:kyteach@kde.state.ky.us).
- Send U.S. mail to *Kentucky Teacher*, 1914 Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601.
- Send a fax to *Kentucky Teacher* at (502) 564-6470.

Please include your name, mailing address, phone number, school and grade level. *Kentucky Teacher* will verify all comments with the sender before publication.

Editor's Note: Find KETS-specific Y2K information on the Kentucky Department of Education's Web site at [www.kde.state.ky.us](http://www.kde.state.ky.us) (click on "Technology," then "Year 2000 Resources"). More Y2K information is posted by the U.S. Department of Education at [www.ed.gov/offices/OCIO/year/](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCIO/year/).

# Teachers respond pro and con to commissioner's initiatives

In the December-January issue of *Kentucky Teacher*, "Forum" asked for teacher responses to a set of teacher professional development initiatives presented in November by Education Commissioner Wilmer Cody. (See this issue's "Forum" on Page 2). On this page are two of the responses received — one pro, one con — plus a reply from the commissioner.

Mr. Cody:

(You suggest) that middle school and high school teachers take the Praxis II to determine if they "demonstrate sufficient academic knowledge in their content area." In 1976 I had to meet the guidelines of the Kentucky Department of Education to graduate with a bachelor's degree and receive my certification to teach in grades K-8. ... By 1986, I had to meet ... criteria to receive my master's degree. I met those guidelines as well. ...

Now ... you are proposing that I prove that I have the sufficient academic knowledge to keep my present certification under newly established guidelines. I find this proposal to be offensive. I believe all teachers can advance in teaching knowledge and techniques. However, I thought that was what our professional development days were to provide. ...

How is the teaching profession ever going to receive the respect that we all seek if our own state of Kentucky's education commissioner has questions about the academic ability of Kentucky's teachers already in the classroom?

Respectfully,  
Beverly Johnson  
Twenhofel Middle School, Kenton County  
6th-grade mathematics

(Note: This teacher also has taught U. S. history, world civilization, language arts, health and reading.)

Dr. Cody,

For the first time I am truly impressed with an idea from KDE concerning teacher development. I want to commend you for the suggestion in *Kentucky Teacher* to offer sabbaticals and reimbursement for advanced courses and certifications.

I think this is the first time I have felt the potential for being rewarded for pursuing excellence.

I have an ABD in Educational Leadership, and I have degrees in Political Science, Geography, English and Secondary Education—as well as other endorsements. I have been effectively (however unintentionally) punished for seeking advanced degrees.

Thank you for helping the initiative to restore respect for the teacher who is an academician.

E. Carolyn Tucker  
Dixon Elementary/Middle School, Webster County  
7th- and 8th-grade social studies and language arts

## The commissioner responds . . .

I very much appreciate the comments teachers have made about the teacher education initiatives I proposed in November. At that time, I said that I hoped my proposals would generate discussion about the way Kentucky prepares and develops its teachers. I invited comments, and I welcome them. It is important for us to communicate openly and in good faith.

One of the letters excerpted on this page, and some responses sent by teachers who did not grant permission to print their comments, lead me to believe there is some misunderstanding about my basic assumptions and goals in proposing the initiatives. First, please be assured that I recognize Kentucky's teachers to be highly professional people who work diligently and well to educate children. Even so, I think we as educators owe it to students of today and tomorrow to continue examining how teachers teach and how we can improve the teaching profession.

The primary goal of the teacher education proposals is to raise the professionalism and abilities of

Kentucky's teachers by providing better opportunities for teachers to advance and succeed. One-third of the proposals would affect new teachers only. While many of the remaining initiatives would require more of all teachers, they also would provide financial or professional incentives and support, including salary increases for all teachers, stipends for certain teachers, scholarships and loans for those who further their education, and paid sabbaticals for those who desire to pursue studies in great depth over a protracted period.

I recognize that not every teacher can agree with every proposal, but I hope every teacher will agree that the goal of making good teaching even better is a worthwhile goal. Teachers, I hope we can work together to improve the quality of teaching and education.

I want the dialogue to continue, and I welcome your comments. To review the proposed initiatives, visit [www.kde.state.ky.us/coe/ocpg/dpi/teacherinitiatives/initiatives.htm](http://www.kde.state.ky.us/coe/ocpg/dpi/teacherinitiatives/initiatives.htm) on the Internet.

## Talk to us!

Teachers: *Kentucky Teacher* wants to know what you think, what you need from the Department of Education, what you want to see in future issues.



E-mail [kyteach@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:kyteach@kde.state.ky.us)



Phone (502) 564-3421 or (800) 533-5372  
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Fax (502) 564-6470



Write *Kentucky Teacher*  
1914 Capital Plaza Tower  
500 Mero St.  
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# Write the talk: Teachers use oral language to boost scores

By Sharon Crouch Farmer  
Kentucky Department of Education

In 1995, writing scores for 4th-graders at L.C. Curry Elementary were a bottom-scraping 4.6 on a 140-point scale. By 1998, those scores reached an astonishing 74.6. This school is in one of Bowling Green's poorest neighborhoods, where 98 percent of the 297 students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. What happened?

A number of things took place: School administrators made staff changes, hired classroom aides, allotted extra time for conferencing with students, integrated writing into all content areas and involved faculty in professional development. Those were the most obvious changes. However, the most significant changes came within the classrooms.

Sharyn Bailey, one of the district's two writing cluster leaders and a primary teacher at L.C. Curry, and 4th-grade teacher Betsy Stevens spearheaded an effort by the faculty to examine and improve scores.

"We first realized everyone involved with portfolios had to adopt an attitude for success," said Stevens. That attitude needed to embrace the "team" concept, self-motivation, high expectations of self and students, risk taking and problem solving. "We all began to look for tools and methods and to share them with each other, and we shared each success," Stevens added.

For Bailey, the new emphasis on language development as an essential part of writing has been a key tool.

"Writing is not a skill you're born with. It has to be taught," Bailey said. "If we can't form the words in our minds or say them, then we sure aren't going to be able to form them on paper. Students must be prepared in primary for the language demands of 4th grade."

Bailey emphasizes expression in her primary classroom. "We work on putting words to our feelings to get a point across," she said. Activities include role playing, whole-class descriptive writing and teacher model-

ing of specific types of writing. Daily oral language in the classroom includes such components as synonyms, word analogies, sequencing, similes and phonograms. The walls of the classroom sport "dead words" — those that can be dropped in favor of more descriptive language.

Students write in a journal every day. "I read and respond to those writings and learn not just how they are doing academically but how they are doing personally as well," Stevens said.

Specific questions and problems appear on the classroom chalkboard each day, encompassing all content areas. While students may work on answers independently, they also discuss them as a class.

Students have weekly spelling contracts that require them to learn to use and understand words. "Students are asked to complete seven or eight developmentally appropriate activities involving those words," Bailey said.

Teachers meet with students both one-on-one and with peers. "It's a great way to expand and clarify ideas and gives the student writer the opportunity to hear the point of view of another student. The observers learn appropriate questioning techniques and what to expect when they have a conference," Stevens said.

Fourth-graders at L.C. Curry keyboard each piece they write for portfolios; teachers say students find copy easier to edit that way. Students spend the bulk of their time doing prewriting exercises and conferencing — talking about their story and ideas and taking notes. They develop rough drafts in segments. Teachers and students get together after each segment, as needed, to make sure the focus and purpose of the piece are maintained.

"Students need to feel that what they say is important, that they can write and that [what they write] is appreciated," Bailey said.

The school shares a speech therapist, Bonnie Nicks, with two other schools. Nicks tries to use whole-class language lessons, in addition to traditional pull-out lessons with individual

students or small groups, as a method of meeting the needs of identified students. Both students and teachers benefit. Nicks' work assists teachers in developing language activities for students.

"Language underlies everything these students do all day," Nicks explained. "If they can't understand what you are saying, or if they don't know what words to use to answer, they won't succeed easily."

Nicks says that concentrating on language and listening helps build skills needed for learning — skills that some students don't get at home.

"They don't have conversations at home regularly," she said, "and what they don't experience, they can't use."

Principal Rebecca Duncan, who has been at the school for two years, talks of rewards.

"One of the biggest rewards has been the excitement of our students. They begin to realize that good writing is fun, necessary for success, a good way to express feelings and a way to make an audience laugh, cry or change behavior," Duncan said. "But we're not finished yet. We will continue to make necessary changes and to meet high expectations."

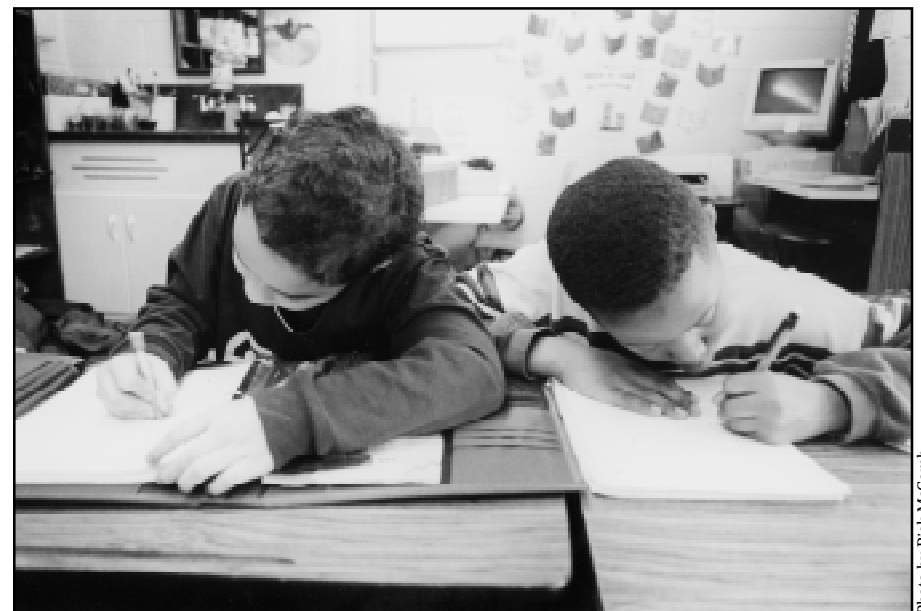


Photo by Rick McComb

Daily journaling is a requirement for students at L.C. Curry Elementary, helping writing scores to soar. Jose Gonzalez (left) and Jarren Nixon take the task seriously.

## Tips for teachers from L.C. Curry teachers

Stress the importance of spoken language. Encourage students to speak in complete sentences, answer questions in complete sentences, and be able to recognize spoken and written complete sentences.

Help students become skilled at sequencing their own ideas, retelling events in their own lives in proper sequence.

Encourage descriptive embellishment through spoken and written language and expressive artwork.

Help students identify and describe feelings.

Give students words each week to research, use in daily language and incorporate into paragraphs.

Special tip for 4th-grade teachers: Communicate with primary teachers so they know how to prepare students for success at the next level.

# Peer conferencing: Rewards outweigh the risks



**By Elaine Story**  
Language Arts Teacher and Cluster Leader  
Mason County Middle School

*The following article is adapted from a longer article printed in the Fall 1998 issue of "Kentucky English Bulletin," a publication of the Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts. It is printed here with permission.*

Teachers are often reluctant to try peer conferencing in their day-to-day classroom instruction. *Who has the time? Students do not know how to help each other. They correct only surface errors. It's a waste of valuable instruction time.*

Ideally, peer conferencing is not something we must make time for; it is a natural part of day-to-day writing time. Of course, students must be taught how to conference, and they will make common mistakes as they are learning. But peer conferencing will not be a waste of valuable instruction time when students are given the training and experience — and the freedom to discover each other's unique styles, strengths and weaknesses. Teachers who take the risk of peer conferencing in their classroom gain rewarding experiences for both themselves and their students.

**Making Time:** Any teacher who teaches writing knows that students write/think/revise at different speeds and levels. Allowing for these differences in a given block of time set aside for writing is *messy* but necessary. While some students are researching or writing on computers, and some are prewriting, drafting, pondering topics, reading model papers from teacher-provided files, conferencing with the teacher or, yes, goofing off, some students could be reading each others' drafts and making comments or asking questions, helping each other improve the quality of their writing.

**Controlling the Pace:** Peer conferencing can help with the burden every writing teacher faces in trying to conference with 120 students a day. Teachers can control the pace in several ways:

- Ask students to have at least one peer conference before they have a teacher conference.
- Require that students revise their own papers before requesting a teacher conference.
- Ask students to jot down two questions they want answered during their conferences so the teacher or peer has a targeted problem to address. This gentle nudge forces students to look analytically at their own papers. Identifying your own writing strengths and weaknesses is an important step in effective self-revision, which is ultimately what we want students to be able to do.

class to generate questions to help the writers improve the pieces. Reading and discussing the benchmarks can also give students examples of strengths and weaknesses in the six elements of proficient writing. Read drafts or have students read their drafts to the class or to small groups, and instruct students to jot down questions or suggestions as they listen, then give the suggestions to the writers. Review ways to begin pieces effectively. Display the six elements and any tips you have collected in your experience and research. Provide models of well-written pieces.

**Modeling the Writing Process:** Whenever possible, write with your students. This helps you remember what it's like to struggle over words. Students benefit when they see you delight over a well-chosen word or



Mason County Middle School students Megan Turk (left) and Randi Rosenbaum confer about a personal narrative Megan is writing. Their teacher, Elaine Story, is an advocate of peer conferencing, calling it an effective learning tool for students and a major time saver for teachers.

**Reviewing the Basics:** Students must have a basic understanding of the six elements of proficient writing: *purpose and audience, idea development, organization, sentence structure, wording and correctness.* How you teach or review these elements is up to you. To illustrate the differences between a piece that has a focused purpose and a piece that does not can be as easy as sharing the two pieces with the class. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of both pieces. Ask the

bang your head when you become blocked by frustration. When you write with your students, you can ask them for suggestions; you can model a more mature level of writing; you can demonstrate your love for writing and the pride that comes with a finished product. Displaying enthusiasm and flaws lets students know it's okay to make mistakes, to change your mind, to scratch out and to brag about a well-turned phrase.

**Being a Student:** I never truly understand an assignment until I do it myself. This year I wanted students to try a personal essay, but because I did not have many models, I felt insecure in asking them to write one. I studied the characteristics and began drafting my own. I shared my prewriting list and rough drafts, and I read my final copy to the class. I discovered it was not as difficult as I had feared, and I felt more confident in asking the students to write. They too studied the characteristics, read models, and pondered over appropriate topics. We all learned together.

**Modeling:** Once you have exposed your writing to the unforgiving scrutiny of your class, continue modeling correct questioning techniques. I once wrote a descriptive vignette about the burial of my grandmother and brought it to the class with a genuine desire for help. I had questions about word choice. The students were reluctant to offer suggestions, because they knew I had missed a day of school to attend my grandmother's funeral and thought they would upset me. But how many times do we read sensitive material from our students and try to respond to it strictly on the basis of writing? I start conferences like this with a disclaimer, admitting to the student that the content or idea behind the writing is far more important than the quality — portfolio or no portfolio.

**Giving Instruction:** I often eavesdrop on peer conferences, then ask both students to listen while I conference the same piece. I point out the value of the suggestions one student has given another, but I usually add more so both students gain an idea of an effective conference. I have asked two brave students to model conferencing for the entire class. One student reads while the other gives suggestions. The class is free to agree and disagree with the suggestions given. We all learn together by sharing ideas about what constitutes good writing.

# Teachers' professional development is improving student writing

By Faun S. Fishback  
Kentucky Department of Education

In the Rockcastle County and Oldham County school districts, teachers don't say, "Today we're doing a portfolio piece."

Instead, students write reviews of books they are reading. Social studies students express their opinions in letters to the editor of the local paper. Auto mechanics students write safety pamphlets. Woodshop students write how-to brochures.

Some of these assignments may be included in student portfolios; many won't be. The important thing is that students are responding to well-designed writing tasks that link with their learning in a content area. They are communicating what they've learned by writing about it.

Several years ago this might not have been the case. However, in recent years these two school districts have placed high priority on improving student writing by training teachers to teach real-life writing forms.

The approaches may vary slightly, but their foundations are strikingly similar: Both districts build their writing programs on strong administrative support for professional development in writing, teacher participation in writing projects at nearby universities, a clearly established district goal to improve student writing and teachers who are willing to work toward that goal by integrating writing across the curriculum.

With strong, continuing professional development, English teachers and content area teachers alike have blossomed as writing instructors. As teachers learned more about the writing process, schools in both districts raised their writing scores 10 to 20 points on the accountability index between 1994 and 1998.

## Rockcastle County

Three years ago, Rockcastle County schools became focused on writing, said Shelby Reynolds, district instructional supervisor. The district polled teachers to find out what type of professional development they needed. Principals helped decide how professional development would be delivered.

"We decided early on that writing is the key to success for KIRIS (Kentucky's former student testing and school accountability system), and we expect it will be for CATS (a new system taking effect this year)," Reynolds said. "The increase in our students' scores reflects the increase in their ability to write well."

Several teachers in the district were participating in the Eastern Kentucky Writing Project, and others had taken English classes at Eastern Kentucky University. The district sought help from Charles Whitaker, director of the writing project and an English professor at Eastern. Whitaker has worked with Rockcastle County teachers for three years because of what he terms their "high-intensity, long-term commitment" to improve writing instruction and student writing.

"Rockcastle County is doing quality things," Whitaker said. "Often districts see professional development as a one-shot hit. It doesn't work that way with writing. The approach by this district offers teachers time to learn and lots of encouragement."

For the past three fall semesters, groups of teachers have met with Whitaker to learn how to design good writing tasks across the curriculum. They read and critique student writing. They put what they learn into classroom practices. About 20 teachers volunteer each year for training, and they receive stipends supported through collaborative funding by the school district and the Eastern Kentucky Writing Project. Whitaker also



Photo by Rick McComb

**Brodhead Elementary teacher Kathy Dyehouse asks a student a question as she encourages him to focus on the message he wants to deliver to his audience. Dyehouse is an Eastern Kentucky Writing Project Fellow.**

meets with teachers individually or in groups after school or during planning periods.

## At the high school

On-site leadership is important to the writing program's success at Rockcastle County High. Interim principal Ruth Allen says her background as an Eastern Kentucky Writing Project Fellow gives her an "inside view of writing. Teachers feel they can come to me to ask for help."

Several faculty members at the high school, like senior English teacher Jennifer Mattingly, also are Eastern Kentucky Writing Project Fellows. Mattingly, who was writing cluster leader last year, and Allene Cornelius, this year's writing cluster leader, compiled a notebook of writing materials for teachers to use as reference. Teachers also look to the school's writing cluster leader for writing training and for help in developing writing tasks.

## Brodhead Elementary

Student accountability scores at Brodhead Elementary have risen from zero to 72.87 as the teachers have learned more about teaching writing. There have been no novice writers in the 4th grade for two years.

"We knew immediately we didn't know how to write," said Principal Mark McKinney. "We looked for anything to help us improve." The Eastern Kentucky Writing Project and Charles Whitaker, its director, provided help and motivation. Several teachers at Brodhead are Writing Project Fellows. All feel comfortable asking for help from Whitaker or one another.

"Work with a focused purpose" is a motto at Brodhead, and writing is the faculty's focused purpose. Teachers teach writing consistently throughout the school. "Every class uses the same process, same vocabulary," said primary teacher Kathy Dyehouse. "Once we knew the methods and how to set up writing prompts correctly, it made a big difference in the children's writing."

*Continued on next page*



## Oldham County

Since the second year of education reform, Oldham County schools have required every student in every grade to have a writing and a mathematics portfolio. Since 1997, the district has set writing requirements for nonaccountability grades. There are district exit standards in writing for grades 5, 8 and 12. In this district, an apprentice-level writing portfolio is a minimum requirement for high school graduation.

Elizabeth Dick, a district director of instructional support and a Louisville Writing Project Fellow, works closely with writing cluster leaders in each building. Together, they are responsible for much of the district's ongoing instructional support. They get assistance from the 12 Oldham County teachers who also are fellows of the Louisville Writing Project at the University of Louisville.

Oldham County's writing program encourages teachers to write with their students, submit their own work for the students to critique and demonstrate for students how to receive constructive criticism on writing.

"Teacher writing is the key!" Dick said. "It made all the difference in my classroom when I wrote along with my students."

Dick holds monthly meetings with the cluster leaders. The meetings give teachers a chance to talk with others outside their building, to share samples of student work and exchange adult-written work that can be used as models, she said. They take the information back to teachers at their schools.

Portfolio analysis is an important instructional process for teachers, Dick said. For example, last summer teachers from LaGrange Elementary met to review student writing. Each group, composed of a teacher from each grade level, evaluated portfolio pieces from a certain grade level. Each group presented its findings, pointing out strengths, weaknesses, common problems and other information that would help teachers guide their students' writing.

Dick holds after-school seminars on certain topics such as improving the letter to the reviewer and on-demand writing. She works with teachers during their planning periods. She also conducts overview sessions on

portfolios for new employees each year.

A four-week course on writing for parents was successful this fall and will be repeated this winter as an established district program, Dick said. The weekly hour-and-a-half sessions informed parents about the types of writing their children are doing; how parents can conference with their children about writing; and writing content, mechanics and ethics.

### At the high school

"Not every school will produce a novelist, but every student will at some time in his or her life have to write a transactive piece to communicate something in the real world," said English teacher Dewey Hensley. "That could have a great impact on who they are and who they become." Hensley and Judy Texas are writing cluster leaders at South Oldham County High School.

Getting teachers to see that writing emerges from a content area is important. "Writing is not just the responsibility of English teachers. It must be across disciplines," Hensley said. When a school has a program to produce better writers, the responsibility ripples out to all teachers, he added.

Hensley, a former co-director of the writing project at the University of Louisville and a current member of the state Writing Advisory Committee, said he enjoys his work as cluster leader.

"I've learned more about writing by teaching it," he explained. "It's an investment of time, but it's worthwhile to see the changes happening with teachers and students."

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*Interested in finding out more about what's happening in these two districts to improve student writing? Most of the administrators and teachers interviewed for this story can be reached by e-mail through the KETS global listing. Here are their phone numbers:*

**Shelby Reynolds** — (606) 256-2125.

**Ruth Allen, Jennifer Mattingly and Allene Cornelius** — (606) 256-4816.

**Mark McKinney and Kathy Dyehouse** — (606) 758-8512.

**Charles Whitaker**, Eastern Kentucky Writing Project director, by phone at (606) 622-2093 or by e-mail at [engwhita@acs.eku.edu](mailto:engwhita@acs.eku.edu).

**Elizabeth Dick** — (502) 222-8880.

**Dewey Hensley** — (502) 241-6681.



## Gov. Patton talks with teachers developing CATS test questions

Approximately 100 teachers met in Frankfort and Louisville in October to select and write questions for the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS). Kentucky Gov. Paul Patton paid a surprise visit to the teachers who worked at the Louisville site.

Patton told the teachers he stopped by because he was "very interested in the test and how it is developed. The teachers here today represent every region of Kentucky, and I have faith in your ability to produce a sound accountability test."

The governor and the teachers exchanged ideas about what they consider important about the CATS testing and the test development process. He told the group of teachers working on the content for social studies, "When you're leading the way in education reform, you're going to have to

reevaluate occasionally, but you have to continue to move forward."

Teachers developing the mathematics content questions showed Patton the types of questions Kentucky students are expected to answer. "When I see our students being asked questions on these levels, I know we are moving in the right direction," he said. "The questions they can answer today are much more advanced than anything I was taught at their age."

Patton thanked the teachers for their hard work during the week-long work session and encouraged them to "go back to your communities and spread the word that you helped develop this test."

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See the center pages for a mini-poster saluting the Kentucky teachers who worked on the CATS test development team.



Robin Glascock (left), a teacher at Harrison County Middle School, and Ernestine Hall of the Jefferson County school district office talk with Gov. Paul Patton, who paid a surprise visit to teachers working on new state assessment questions.

COMMONWEALTH ACCOUNTABILITY TESTING SYSTEM

Made in Kentucky

The new test for Kentucky’s public schools is being designed and developed right here in our state, by parents, taxpayers, business people, school administrators and Kentucky teachers.

They have been working with the nation’s top testing experts and with one of the oldest and largest test publishers in America, to develop a test that is valid, reliable, fair and credible — a test that reflects national standards and measures what Kentucky’s children should know and be able to do.

The Kentucky Board of Education and Commissioner Bill Cody sincerely thank the following teachers, from all across the commonwealth, who helped design the test and select the questions for CATS, the new Commonwealth Accountability Testing System:

A.B. Combs Elementary Sandy Hoskins Adaiville School	Casey County Middle School Bennett R. Williams Caverna Elementary School	Charles Kollenberg Julianne F. Tuell Carol E. Hall	Longest Elementary School Dianne Grace Louisa Middle School	Russell Middle School Susan Y. Nichols Russellville Middle School
Rebecca McKinney Anderson Middle School	Marcia Witherspoon Caverna High School	Ernestine Hall Diane Polley	Rita Jane Shelton Louisville Male High School	Karen Corbin Sheryl Milam
Sandra Hendry Ballard High School	Sam Dick Central City Elementary School	Joanne Greaver Laura Clifford	Sharon Wuoremmaa Madison Central High School	Ruth Dunn Elementary School Lauretta Beckham
Sharis M. Lattimore Ballard Memorial High School	Mary Ann Payton Central Hardin High School	Pamela T. Boykin Graves County High School	Phillip Runyon Ron Shuler	Saffell Street Elementary School Pamela M. Burks
Jan Nave Bowles Jo Ann Cooksey Julian W. Elliott	Nora Sweat Chawes Elementary School	Susan Higdon Graves County Middle School	Brenda Hester Mayfield Middle School	Charolette Puckett Ginny Thompson
Shirley Burgess Pamela Layman Barren County Middle School	Anthony Johnson Christian County Board of Education	Rebecca Frizzell Gray Middle School	Anne T. McNeilly Meace Middle School	Salyersville Grade School Wanda Felber
Helen Russell Shannon Waddell Brenda Johnson Barret Traditional Middle School	Elizabeth Everett Christian County High School	Anna Marie Tracy Greensburg Elementary School	Frances S. Gilliam Millard Elementary School	Scott County High School Joretta Jones
Vicki Short Bumann Beechgrove Elementary School	Eva Patricia McGowan Christian County Middle School	James Lee Elmore Greenup County High School	Karen Adkins Roy Adkins	Sebastian Middle School Joyce Herald
Jim Hicks Beechwood High School	Eileen H. White Clark Elementary School	Sandra Parks Ferrer Sharon F. Stephens	Teddie Renee Buchanan Model Lab School	Beverly Neace Semple Elementary School
Judith T. Dusing Belfry High School	Lynn Johnson Clay County Board Of Education	Sharon F. Stephens Hancock County High School	Kim Alexander Karen Baum	Jane Dietz Southside Elementary School
Rita Scott Bell County Middle School	Hope Smith Clay County Middle School	Linda Tongate Hardin County Board of Education	Allison J. Vonantz Montgomery High School	Pat Higgins Southside Primary School
Chuck Blank Belmont and Lacy Schools	Myra L. Davis Joan Hobbs	Michelle East Harrison County Middle School	Trish Stull Morehead Elementary School	Artavia D. Marshall Southwestern Pulaski County High School
June T. Nicholson Bend Gate Elementary School	Joan Hobbs Clay Elementary School	Robin Glascock Harrodsburg Middle School	Ronetta Brown Morgan County Board Of Education	Carol Parkey Spencer County High School
Tammy Lipsey Benton Elementary School	Marcella Ralston Collins Lane Elementary School	Barry Welty Hart County High School	Arle M. Smith Morgantown Elementary School	Ann Perdew Stanford Elementary School
Frances Tichenor Bewins Elementary School	Linda McKinley Collins Lane School	Gloria Jean Sanders Lisa Willian	Linda Tyree Muhlenberg North Middle School	Patsy W. McLaren Stinnett Elementary School
Jennifer Hiers Cross Blackberry Grade School	Valerie Smith Cumberland County Elementary School	Kim Geveden Henry Clay High School	Wanda Duval Muhlenberg South Middle School	Kim Crisp T.K. Stone Middle School
Gerald Mitchell Justice Bluegrass Middle School	Margaret Henderson Cumberland County High School	Anita F. Gaynor Henry County Middle School	Dana Tipton Everett Murray Middle School	George Pennington Taylor County Elementary School
Linda Taylor Bondurant Middle School	Melissa Ashby Cumberland County Middle School	Denise Perry Henry County High School	Mike Epperson Myers Middle School	Jeff Walker Taylor County High School
Mary E. Parnell Bondurant Middle School	Nancy B. Wells Cumberland Trace Elementary School	Michael McCardwell Heritage Elementary School	Sandra Savells Nicholasville Elementary School	Valerie D. Kessler Temple Hill Elementary School
	Denise Henry Danville High School	M. Kent Stevens Highland Middle School	Nancy Gwen Owen Noe Middle School	Melinda D. Owens Twenhofel Middle School
	Jim Moore Davess County Schools	Thelma Parel Holmes High School	Jan McDowell North Calloway Elementary School	Ruth Roberson Union County High School
	Scott Firkins Deming School	Ruth Johnson Hopkins Elementary School	Sandy Sacco Verdy Middle School	George Patmor Verdy Middle School



Ann French



## United we sing

**By Faun S. Fishback**  
Kentucky Department of Education

It is common practice for some teachers to divide their days among several schools in a district to provide special instruction to students. So it wasn't that unusual two years ago for Barry M. Turner Sr. to be asked to teach choral music at two different Fayette County high schools.

What is unusual is Turner's approach to the assignment. Instead of looking at it as "two different schools, two different repertoires," Turner said, he saw the opportunity to direct a larger choir that could do larger pieces of music and offer a bigger variety of voices. He combined classes at the two

schools into one choir. The 80 students at Bates Creek High School, where Turner has taught for 11 years, practice the same music as the 35 students at Henry Clay High School, where he has taught for two years. After-school rehearsals bring both groups together in a combined chorus.

Turner says he is pleased with the results. "The students love being together as well as traveling and performing together," he said. "They get along well. The combined chorus is something they really want to do."

In a competition on a cruise ship to Nassau last summer, the chorus received the first-place trophy. The group performs for civic functions in Lexington and presents several con-

certs each year. This year, auditions for Henry Clay's musical theater production are open to Bates Creek members of the combined chorus. "The students are excited about working together on stage," Turner said.

A project in early 1999 will find the combined chorus singing background vocals for a song on the new Backstreet Boys album. Brian Littrell, a member of the top-40 singing group, attended Bates Creek High School and was a member of Turner's chorus.

Turner says he has "created an atmosphere for music lovers in the learning institution. I take advantage of every opportunity that comes along for the public to hear the combined chorus of Henry Clay and Bates Creek high schools."

For more information, contact Turner at Bates Creek High School by phone at (606) 381-3620 or by e-mail through the KETS global listing or at [btturner@tchs.fayette.k12.us](mailto:btturner@tchs.fayette.k12.us).



**Barry Turner directs the combined choir that mixes voices of students at Bates Creek and Henry Clay high schools in Fayette County.**

Photo by Rick McComb

## McCracken County builds bridges to middle school

**By Donna K. Mattingly**  
Counselor, Heath Middle School

*Editor's Note: Educators emphasize the importance of a smooth transition any time students move from one school building to another or from one level to another (elementary to middle school, middle to high school), even within the same building. Here's how one district paves the way for change.*

Making the transition from elementary to middle school is the accepted order of educational growth and maturity. Still, educators hear 5th-graders express fear and uncertainty about making the move to middle school.

Last year, Heath Middle in McCracken County increased its efforts to ease those fears. Heath's school council collaborated with the councils at its two feeder elementaries to pro-

vide a successful, multifaceted transition plan for soon-to-be 6th-graders. Students at the elementary and middle schools also contributed to the success of the program.

First, Heath 6th-graders were asked, "What do you wish you had known about Heath Middle School before you enrolled as a 6th-grader?" Their answers fell into six categories: academic, staff, procedures, programs, food service and facility.

To help elementary students look forward to middle school, the three school councils suggested strategies that included several activities:

- A "Did You Know ...?" fact sheet was prepared using 5th-graders' questions and 6th-graders' answers.
- A panel of 6th-graders visited each elementary school to answer questions about middle school and to

distribute the fact sheet.

- Each 5th-grade homeroom sent two students to shadow 6th-graders for one day. The 5th-graders kept a journal to report back to their respective homerooms.

- All 5th-graders took the traditional year-end tour of the middle school.

- Each 5th-grader's family received the March, April and May issues of the middle school newsletter, which contained features written specifically for 5th-graders and their parents.

At a follow-up meeting, the three councils evaluated the effectiveness of the transition plan and used their findings to make plans for this spring. As recommended by this year's 6th-graders, more 5th-graders will be asked to shadow 6th-grad-

ers this spring. During half-day visits to the middle school, 5th-graders will eat lunch, meet 6th-grade teachers, follow an abbreviated class schedule and tour the building. A night meeting will be held for 5th-grade students and their parents to share information about middle school expectations.

The transition program has been a win-win situation for everyone involved. A student echoed the positive evaluation.

"I felt less stress because [Heath Middle School] students came to my school and answered questions we wanted to know," said the student. For more information, contact Donna Mattingly by phone at (502) 488-3128 or by e-mail through the KETS global list or at [dmattingly@mccracken.k12.ky.us](mailto:dmattingly@mccracken.k12.ky.us).



# Two Sizzlin' Ideas for Summer 'PD'

By Sharon Crouch Farmer  
Kentucky Department of Education

## Get your hands on the arts!

Chris Kelly and Lynn Moore, preschool teachers at Covington Independent's James E. Biggs Early Childhood Education Center, were concerned about meeting a schoolwide goal to combine literacy and fine arts. Neither had an arts background or a great deal of time for planning.

"To translate a love of the arts to our students, we realized we would have to awaken the artist in ourselves," Kelly said. They took the plunge and attended the Louisville location of the Kentucky Institutes for Arts in Education during the summer of 1997.

"We learned during those two weeks that it's process, not product, that's important," Moore said. "We learned that it is unnecessary to plan additional activities, that the arts and humanities can be part of everything you do."

Institute activities offer hands-on experience in drama, music, dance, creative writing and the visual arts. Participants, guided by professional artists, explore their own creative potential, share ideas and experiences, and discuss connections to curriculum development.

Moore and Kelly left the summer '97 institute confident, then returned in summer '98 to tell first-time participants what the experience had meant to them and share some of the work their students had produced the past year.

### Summer '99

The three Kentucky Institutes for Arts in Education are two-week professional development seminars for teachers, administrators, parents and others interested in promoting and implementing arts in education. They are collaborative projects of the Kentucky Center for the Arts and the three universities that host the institutes:

- Murray State University, June 1-11
- Morehead State University, June 14-25
- University of Louisville (at Kentucky Center for the Arts), June 21 - July 2.

All three institutes provide hands-on experience in creative writing, dance, drama, music and visual arts.

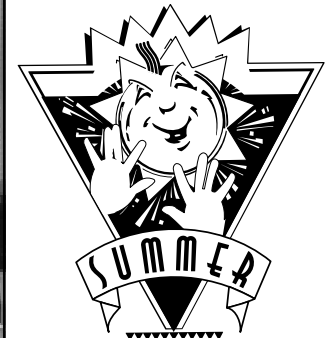
Professional artists who work in educational settings serve as faculty. A day-long field trip and special presentations provide information and ideas about resources, facilities and connections to curriculum.

Institute supporters include Ashland, Inc. Foundation, Kentucky Center for the Arts and the Kentucky Department of Education.

Space in the institutes is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis. For information, contact Jeffrey Jamner, director of school programs, at (502) 562-0703 or [JJamner@kca.org](mailto:JJamner@kca.org). Information is coming soon to the Web at [www.kca.org](http://www.kca.org).



Photo by Sharon Crouch Farmer



Becky Rhodes gets creative during a summer session of the Kentucky Institute for Arts in Education. Rhodes said she borrows a lot from the humanities to get results as a learning-disabled resource teacher at Fairdale Elementary in Jefferson County. "My students are hesitant to take risks, so I have to create an atmosphere that says it's okay to be different. That's one thing I am learning here," she said.

## Geography + technology = graduate credit!

The Kentucky Geographic Alliance and the National Geographic Society again will sponsor the Summer Geography Institute, scheduled for June 20-July 2 at Murray State University. A Hancock County High School teacher who participated in the event in 1996 recommends the summer '99 session to other teachers.

"During my two weeks at Murray, I became more familiar with the use of technology in the classroom, learned new teaching strategies, became familiar with state and national geography standards, acquired many lesson plans and classroom materials, and made new friends from all areas of the state," says social studies teacher Linda Tongate. "In the process, I had fun — and I earned six hours of credit toward my master's degree *free!*"

The institute showcases Murray State's geography technology resources and spotlights the role of technology in geography instruction. Sessions also examine the role of integrated geography instruction in preparing students for the five-area social studies core of the state's new assessment of student achievement. Teachers at all grade levels may apply for six hours of college credit, free room and board, and reimbursement for mileage.

Tongate says she considers the institute one of the most important experiences in her teaching career. "I encourage any teacher who wants to be part of one of Kentucky's best teacher training programs to apply," she said.

For more information, contact Carlisle County social studies teacher Tom Wilson by e-mail at [tw@apex.net](mailto:tw@apex.net); by mail at 1310 South 10th St., Mayfield, KY 42066; or by phone during evening hours at (502) 247-1286.



# Two districts blaze trails to equity in technology

By Sharon Crouch Farmer  
Kentucky Department of Education

*Gender inequities in mathematics and science have been well documented and are now found to be carrying over to technology learning. In 1990, a study of elementary and secondary schools found that males dominated school computing activities and that girls accounted for less than 30 percent of all before- and after-school computer use.*

*Why? Traditional thinking is that males naturally excel in mathematics and logic and females do not. Strong role models for females in these areas are few. By middle school, females are less interested and less confident in those areas. In fact, some researchers report that 82 percent of middle school girls do not see themselves as strong mathematical thinkers.*

*Society is beginning to change, but the change is slow without consistent and specialized opportunities to expose girls to computers. At least two school districts in Kentucky, the Kenton and Robertson county districts, began to change last summer with programs that involve girls in nontraditional experiences.*

## Robertson County

### Girls earn and learn

Summer/part-time job development in the rural counties of Kentucky can be a tough job. Janet England, who develops such programs for students in Robertson County, has to be innovative.

England, coordinator of the district's family resource and youth services center, got the job done — with a little help from grant writer Peggy Hedges; district technology coordinator Patti Price; and Crystal Carpenter, a former student now working for YES Computer Systems.

The Robertson County Board of Education received a Job Training Partnership Act grant for Summer Youth Employment and Training for 14- and 15-year-olds. Carpenter and England wrote a curriculum that called for students to install central processing units into computers and use various software. The curriculum also reinforced critical-thinking and life-coping skills. The TENCO Private Industry Council provided funding through Buffalo Trace Area Development District.

The four girls who participated in

the eight-week program had to complete 175 academic hours and 75 work hours. They were paid a stipend of \$599 for the completion of the academic hours and \$5.15 per hour for working at the Licking Valley CAP Senior Citizens Center or the local library. They received a \$25 bonus for completing the program.

"We started them out (installing processors) on an old, small hard drive," said Carpenter, "then worked up to a 166 Pentium, 3.2 gigabyte, 32-Ram hard drive with the latest operating system."

"There are few job opportunities in our community," said England, "but the class gave the girls so much more than just a skill. They have grown more confident, their self-esteem has improved, they are positive and knowledgeable."

Eighth-grader Sara Abshire pointed to teamwork as another new experience. "(I've learned that) teamwork is important," she said. "I am not one to naturally participate in a group, so this has been great."



Photo by Sharon Crouch Farmer

Circuit-breaker makers (from left) Nichole Bates, Ashley Oliver, Hillary Smith and Lauren Westendorf learned in last summer's technology camp for girls that they *could* succeed in nontraditional areas. All were 7th-graders at Turkey Foot Middle School in Kenton County.

## Kenton County

### Girls explore and experience

Language arts teacher Peggy Carwin recognized the reaction of her female students when they sat down at computers. It was the same reaction she experienced herself at that age when she faced mathematics problems: Intimidation.

Carwin, who teaches at Turkey Foot Middle School in Kenton County, took a giant step out of her academic specialty to offer a summer workshop of nontraditional experiences for girls.

"The math phobia of old is the computer phobia of today," said Carwin. "Women of my generation lacked the confidence to master the math skills necessary for successful careers in science, medicine or engineering. Many middle school girls today are hesitant to try to master the computer skills necessary for high-paying jobs."

Using her connections as a School-to-Work coordinator, Carwin worked with Northern Kentucky Tech Dean Angela Taylor to put together the facility, instructors and curriculum. The

extended school services program and Northern Kentucky Restaurant Association provided funding.

All 6th- and 7th-grade girls could participate as long as they had passing grades and a record of good behavior. "There are lots of programs for advanced students and for those in low socio-economic environments," explained Carwin. "This program is for those in the middle who often get ignored."

Curriculum for the week-long camp included computer-assisted drafting and building an electronic circuit. The students visited with women who use technology successfully in their careers and toured a local business where women use technology daily.

As a result, Katie Jessee, now an 8th-grader, sees a different future. "I didn't realize how much fun I could have or how much money I could make," she said, "or what all women can do."

# Two of three national awards come to Kentucky superintendents

**DEEP IN THOUGHT** — Ricky Freeman seems totally engaged in learning during class at Deer Park Elementary in Daviess County. The district has drawn national acclaim for its Graduation 2010 initiative to raise student achievement. One recent accolade came from the American Association of School Administrators (see details on this page).

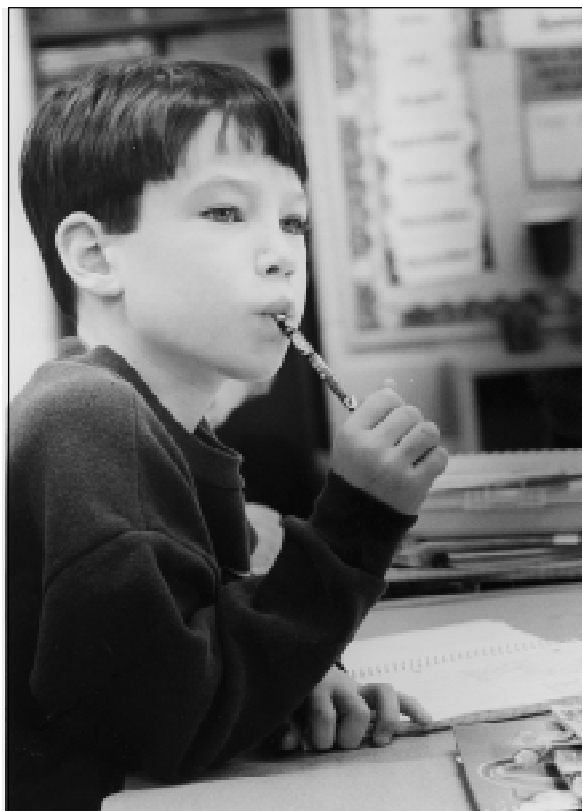


Photo by Rick McComb

Kentucky school superintendents have won two of three “Leadership for Learning” awards given by the American Association of School Administrators for the school year 1998-99. Another Kentucky superintendent won honorable mention.

The annual award recognizes AASA

members who have demonstrated outstanding leadership by creating programs that significantly improve student achievement. Kentucky’s winners are Stephen W. Daeschner of Jefferson County (urban category) and Stuart X. Silberman of Daviess County (rural category). Lois Gray, superinten-

dent of Hardin County Schools, won honorable mention in the rural category.

Daeschner is being honored in the urban districts category for Jefferson County’s Jump Start Early Childhood Program for 3- and 4-year-olds. Information provided by AASA states that Daeschner’s commitment to seeing every student performing at or above grade level by age 10 led him to expand full-day kindergarten for every youngster in the district; consolidate separate preschool programs into a single early childhood program with a common curriculum for all income-eligible 4-year-olds; and enlist financial support from local businesses and corporations to extend the program to at-risk 3-year-olds. Early evidence suggests Jump Start graduates are performing at a higher level in elementary school on districtwide and statewide assessments.

Silberman is being honored for rural Daviess County’s Graduation 2010, an initiative to raise student achievement by giving first-year primary students enriched learning opportunities based on the latest research on brain-based learning. A series of curricular additions — including instruction on a musical instrument, Spanish language lessons, and appreciation of the visual and performing arts — enhance

the students’ neurological development. The program started with a single external partner, the Owensboro Mercy Health System. Several community businesses and higher education institutions have joined the district as partners.

Hardin County’s Lois Gray is one of 12 superintendents in the nation to receive an honorable mention for leadership in effective programs. Her award recognizes the district’s approach to helping all students succeed, starting with a preschool program focused on each child’s health, education and family. The program is a model site for the Kentucky Transition Project (Project STEPS).

AASA plans to recognize Leadership for Learning award winners at the organization’s National Conference on Education, Feb. 19-22 in New Orleans. Each of the three national winners will receive an engraved Steuben sculpture and \$4,000 to support improved educational opportunities for students. The awards have been presented annually at the convention since 1982.

For more information about AASA and its annual recognition programs, go to [www.aasa.org](http://www.aasa.org) on the Internet. Look for descriptions of the winning initiatives in AASA’s “Leadership News” at that site.

## NCTE spring conference

The National Council of Teachers of English will hold its annual spring conference March 4-6 in Cincinnati. Sessions are designed for P-12 teachers interested in the latest strategies for supporting student readers and writers. Many of the sessions are hands-on with a focus on integrating the arts and other disciplines with literacy.

Keynote speakers include authors Robert Pinsky, Dorothy Allison, Walter Dean Myers, Christopher Myers, George Ella Lyon and Robert Scholes; and 1997 National Teacher of the Year Sharon Draper.

For details about registration and housing, call NCTE at (800) 369-6283 or visit [www.ncte.org/meet/spring/99](http://www.ncte.org/meet/spring/99) on the Internet.

## Reminder: KET to air sessions on consolidated planning

*The Department of Education and KET will broadcast three sessions providing technical assistance on the consolidated planning process. The broadcasts are designed for educators to tape and keep on file for use throughout the planning and results assessment process. All three sessions will air on KET Star Channel 703 from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. ET. Note change in channel access number.*

**Feb. 11** — “New Data, Adjustments and Second-Year Application.” What to do with new data; how to make adjustments; how to develop the second-year application for funding. For all individuals (including parents and community members) involved with implementing a consolidated plan (both district and school).

**Feb. 18** — “Readiness.” The “hows and whys” of consolidated planning. A repeat of Regional

Technical Assistance Session 1. Particularly helpful for educators, parents and community partners new to the process.

**March 1** — “Leadership and Component Managers.” For individuals interested in or responsible for implementation of a district or school plan. This is a repeat of Regional Technical Assistance Session #2.

Materials for telecasts are available at [kdeweb.kde.state.ky.us/consolidated/](http://kdeweb.kde.state.ky.us/consolidated/) on the Web. For details, phone Debbie McDonald at (502) 564-2116 or e-mail her through the KETS global address list or at [dmdonal@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:dmdonal@kde.state.ky.us).

# Six schools chosen for Blue Ribbon honors

Kentucky has nominated six elementary schools for recognition in the U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon Schools program for 1998-99:

- Hinsdale Elementary, Kenton County
- Hatcher Elementary, Ashland Independent
- Northern Elementary, Scott County
- Piner Elementary, Kenton County
- Southside Elementary, Woodford County
- William H. Natcher Elementary, Warren County

To be recognized by the Blue Ribbon Schools program, schools must demonstrate a strong commitment to educational excellence for all students. This year's program emphasizes technology; professional development; and school safety, discipline and drug pre-

vention. The program identifies and recognizes the nation's most outstanding public and private schools, makes research-based effectiveness criteria available to all schools for self-assessment and improvement, and encourages schools to share information about best practices

The Kentucky Department of Education sent Blue Ribbon 1998-99 application packets to Kentucky districts and elementary schools. (The recognition program alternates each year between elementary schools and middle-secondary schools.) A panel of Kentucky educators and citizens selected the six top nominees.

Those six schools now represent Kentucky in the national Blue Ribbon Schools program. A national review panel will evaluate the nominations and select schools for national recognition in the spring of 1999.

## Primary students connect

*From Page 1*

"It really didn't hit them until they saw a picture of Geo Bear with a penguin," Barber said. "That bear is in Antarctica!" they said. It really got them interested."

The class study of the polar regions was in addition to the regular curriculum. "I think it is important to find fun and engaging lessons and activities to teach students the skills addressed in the performance standards," Barber said.

She focused the unit on social studies and science. However, what students learned about the North and South Poles also was addressed in mathematics, writing and reading.

To contact Barber, call (502) 485-8348 or send e-mail to [wsbarber@cwix.com](mailto:wsbarber@cwix.com).

## Grants for Law-Related Projects

The Kentucky Bar Foundation is offering grants for nonprofit organizations that initiate law-related projects, including school-based activities. The application deadline is March 12.

Since 1988, the foundation has awarded almost \$370,000 to Kentucky communities to assist in law-related education and services.

For more information, contact the Kentucky Bar Foundation, 514 West Main St., Frankfort, KY 40601; (800) 874-6582.

## Student Assistance Conference

The Kentucky Association of Student Assistance Professionals invites educators to its fourth annual statewide conference, "Student Assistance Programs: A Blueprint for Safe and Drug-Free Schools," on Feb. 25 at the Executive West Hotel in Louisville.

For a conference brochure, contact Barry Kellond, Student Assistance Coordinator, Shelby County High School, PO Box 69, Shelbyville, KY 40066-0069; phone (502) 633-2344; fax (502) 647-0238; e-mail through the KETS global list or at [bkellond@shelby.k12.ky.us](mailto:bkellond@shelby.k12.ky.us).

## Blue Ribbon Schools Program 1999-2000

Middle and high schools are eligible to apply for the next school year's Blue Ribbon recognition. Applications are available on the Web. Go to the U.S. Department of Education's home page at [www.ed.gov/](http://www.ed.gov/) and click on "Topics, A-Z," then "B" for Blue Ribbon Schools. Or go directly to [www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/BlueRibbonSchools/](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/BlueRibbonSchools/). For additional information or hard-copy application packets, contact Kay Anne Wilborn at (502) 564-3421, (800) 533-5372 or [kwilborn@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:kwilborn@kde.state.ky.us).

## KET lists programs for February and March

Kentucky Educational Television's professional development programming for February and March offers many choices for subscribing districts and schools.

### February

Coaching Clinics in Golf, Women's Softball, Gymnastics  
Foreign Language Swapshop — Seminar 2  
Kentucky Council of Teachers of Math Showcase  
Kentucky Science Teachers Association Showcase  
Using CD-ROM in the Physics Classroom — Seminar 1  
Teaching the Writer with Special Needs: Middle Level  
Teaching Journalistic Writing  
Earth Science: A Content Course for Teachers — Seminar 3  
Middle School Writing — Seminar 2

### March

Using CD-ROM in the Physics Classroom — Seminar 2  
Teaching AP English  
Teaching AP U.S. History  
Kentucky Council of Teachers of Math Showcase  
Kentucky Science Teachers Association Showcase  
Writing in the Science Classroom — Seminar 2  
Earth Science: A Content Course for Teachers — Seminar 4  
Teaching the Writer with Special Needs: Elementary Level  
Transforming Middle Schools Through DWoK — Seminar 3  
Community Publishing  
Foreign Language Swapshop — Seminar 3  
Serving Minority Language Students: Secondary Level  
Middle School Writing — Seminar 3

For registration and information, call KET Professional Development at (800) 432-0951.

## Education Technology Conference March 4-6

**Preregistration Deadline: Feb. 12!**

"One of the top six conferences in the nation!" That's how a president of a nationally known technology vendor rates the Kentucky Education Technology Conference. Grab this opportunity to learn and discuss instructional strategies, take home information about collaborative projects, learn new software, hear new and creative ideas on classroom instruction, and discover what students are accomplishing using education technology within the curriculum! More interested in the technical side? Come learn about the latest advances in technology from some of the nation's most respected technicians.

KETC '99 will also spotlight what students have achieved using technol-

ogy tools. The Student Technology Leadership Program — STLP — is hosting several student involvement areas. Watch student know-how in action as students serve as conference associates, junior engineers, technical writers, cyber reporters and videographers.

The deadline for conference preregistration is Feb. 12. Visit the conference Web site at [www.kde.state.ky.us/ketc99](http://www.kde.state.ky.us/ketc99) for registration details. On-site registration will be available March 4-6 at the conference site, the Commonwealth Convention Center in downtown Louisville.



# Bulletin Board

## Assessment committees need you!

The Department of Education seeks people to fill vacancies on content advisory committees for the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System, popularly known as CATS. Members generally serve for three years and develop open-response questions and multiple-choice items for the core content tests.

Committees include teachers of all grade levels, school and district administrators, and university faculty. The committees meet twice a year, with additional meetings scheduled as needed. Members are selected using the department's guidelines for ethnic, gender and geographic balance of representation. Members are reimbursed for expenses related to their participation on the committees. Stipends or fees to pay substitutes are provided when appropriate.

The deadline for applications is Feb. 19. A listing of committee openings and an application form are available at the department's Web site. Go to [www.kde.state.ky.us](http://www.kde.state.ky.us) and click on "Curriculum and Testing," then "Curriculum and Assessment Development."

CONTACT: Rhonda Sims, 18th Floor, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601; (502) 564-2106; [rsims@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:rsims@kde.state.ky.us)

By Lisa York Gross  
Kentucky Department of Education

## Mathematics training set

The spring training for school mathematics leaders is scheduled for sites within each education region.

Region 1: March 23,  
Kentucky Dam Village

Region 2: March 24,  
Cave City Convention Center

Region 3: March 29,  
Gheens Academy

Region 4: March 9,  
Ramada Inn, Florence

Region 5: March 16,  
Holiday Inn North, Lexington

Region 6: March 17,  
Somerset Center for Rural  
Economic Development

Region 7: March 3,  
Morehead State University

Region 8: March 2,  
Jenny Wiley State Park

All sessions will run from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. local time. School mathematics leaders will receive more details in February.

CONTACT: Nela Phillips, 18th Floor, 500 Mero Street, Frankfort, KY 40601; (502) 564-2106; by e-mail through the KETS global listing or [nphillips@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:nphillips@kde.state.ky.us)



## Language arts convention scheduled

The Kentucky Council of Teachers of English/Language Arts' 63rd annual convention will be Feb. 12 and 13 at the Galt House East in Louisville. This year's theme is "Kentucky Readers and Writers: A Common Wealth of Literacy." The convention is for educators from primary through the university level.

Featured speakers include Harvey Daniels, author of "Best Practice" and "Methods That Matter"; author Stephen Tchudi; teacher Jan Cheripco; and children's author Evangeline Nicholas.

More information about the convention is available on the Internet at [www.kcte.org/conference/conference.html](http://www.kcte.org/conference/conference.html).

CONTACT: Donna Vincent, PO Box 61, Graham, KY 42344; (502) 338-4058; by e-mail through the KETS global listing or [dvincent@mberg.k12.ky.us](mailto:dvincent@mberg.k12.ky.us) or [donnav@muhlon.com](mailto:donnav@muhlon.com)



## Join the Martin Luther King Jr. Academic Project

The Department of Education is co-sponsoring the Martin Luther King Jr. Academic Project, designed to encourage educators, students and communities to develop long-term initiatives and programs that reflect the tenets and teachings of the late Martin Luther King Jr.

The program has separate divisions for students, educators and community. Each division has seven entry categories: writing, fine arts, technology, communications, community involvement, integrated curriculum plans and service learning. Students and educators may participate in one of four levels: primary, elementary, middle school or high school. Projects may include lesson plans that reflect the theme: "Positive Actions in Our Schools and Communities."

Competitions will be held at the district, regional and state level. One state finalist will be chosen from each division and in each of the seven categories.

District-level competitions must be completed by Feb. 15. State-level winners will be announced on April 4. The project is sponsored in part by the Department of Education and the Kentucky Martin Luther King Jr. Commission.

CONTACT: Karen Simms, 17th Floor, 500 Mero St., Frankfort, KY 40601; (502) 564-3678; [ksimms@kde.state.ky.us](mailto:ksimms@kde.state.ky.us)

## Murray seeks nominations for teacher recognition

Murray State University is accepting nominations for the 1999 Kentucky Outstanding Teacher Awards. The university-sponsored program awards \$1,000 to a teacher in each education level: primary/elementary, middle school and high school.

All full-time teachers in Kentucky are eligible. Judges will evaluate each nominee's service and commitment to education.

To nominate, send no more than two double-spaced, typewritten pages about the nominee. Include a paragraph (with specific examples) on each of three areas: excellence in teaching, contributions to parental involvement in learning and commitment to school excellence. Also include your own name, job title, relationship to the nominee, address and telephone number.

The deadline for nominations is April 17. Mail to Dean's Office, College of Education, Murray State University, PO Box 9, Murray, KY 42071-0009.

CONTACT: Russell Wall, (502) 762-3832; Tami Dandeneau, (502) 762-3817

# Kentucky Teacher

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

A teacher travels to Antarctica.....	1
Y2K brings challenges, opportunities.....	2
Teachers respond pro and con to teacher development proposals.....	3
Writing instruction:	
Language development.....	4
Peer conferencing .....	5
Professional development.....	6
A salute to teachers who helped build CATS .....	Center
Two out-of-the-box ideas.....	10
Sizzlin' ideas for professional development.....	11
Equity: Girls and computers.....	12
News and ideas for teachers.....	13 -15

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# Kentucky Teacher

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

February 1999



Photo by Rick McComb

**READY WITH THE ANSWER** — Student Colleen Miller appears eager to answer the teacher's question during class at L. C. Curry Elementary in Bowling Green. Colleen and her schoolmates have demonstrated big gains in writing, raising the school's scores on state writing tests from 4.6 in 1995 to 74.6 in 1998. To find out how, see Page 4.

*I want to commend you for the suggestion ... to offer sabbaticals and reimbursement for advanced courses and certifications. I think this is the first time I have felt the potential for being rewarded for pursuing excellence.*

**E. Carolyn Tucker, teacher, Dixon Elementary/Middle School, Webster County, in a response to Commissioner Wilmer Cody's professional development proposals. For the rest of her response, plus comments from a teacher with a different point of view, see Page 3.**

Kentucky Department of Education

Wilmer S. Cody, Commissioner